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**2017 Environmental Candidate Questionnaire   
for New York City Candidates**

Thank you for taking the time to fill out the New York League of Conservation Voters Questionnaire.

The New York League of Conservation Voters is the only non-partisan statewide environmental organization in New York that fights for clean water, clean air, renewable energy and open space through political action. This questionnaire is designed to elicit your views regarding what environmental, public health, clean energy and transit and environmental justice groups consider to be the most important issues of the day. Responses may inform NYLCV’s educational and legislative programs and actions NYLCV takes in the election cycle.

Responses should be considered public. Although NYLCV may choose not to publicize responses to every question, verbatim responses may be reproduced and distributed publicly. If so, your responses may be shortened, if necessary, but will not be edited in substantive ways. If you choose to refer us to a position paper or website, please indicate exactly what text you would like us to cite. For candidates choosing not to respond to the questionnaire, NYLCV will note as much in its public materials.

NYLCV and its partners in the environmental policy arena believe that New York’s voters are determined to make the environment a voting issue this year. Candidate positions on issues such as protecting public health, building a clean energy future, and mitigating climate change will help voters decide how to cast their ballots this election cycle. This questionnaire is one of the primary ways the public will get this information.

Here are a few guidelines:

* Questionnaires are due **Friday, May 19**
  + The completed questionnaire is mandatory for endorsement consideration and must be submitted via e-mail as a Microsoft Word file to: [politics@nylcv.org](mailto:politics@nylcv.org)
  + Questions or extension requests may be directed to Joshua Klainberg ([jklainberg@nylcv.org](mailto:jklainberg@nylcv.org))
* To ensure your responses address the issues NYLCV and its partners are most concerned about, please review [NYLCV’s 2014-18 NYC Policy Agenda](http://nylcv.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/NYC_Agenda_FINAL.pdf)
* After receipt of the completed questionnaire, candidates will be invited to participate in a formal interview with our Chapter Board
* All candidate endorsements will be made by the state board on July 26, 2017

**Campaign Contact Information**

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Campaign Manager’s name and email: There is no campaign manager appointed as yet. The Chair of the Campaign Committee is Rovika Rajkishun, [rovika.rajkishun@gmail.com](mailto:rovika.rajkishun@gmail.com). 917-596-0647  
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**PERSONAL INFORMATION**

1. Please share you accomplishments or experiences that indicate your commitment to advancing a pro-environment agenda. These experiences may be professional or personal.

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| I scored 100% on the Environmental Scorecard in 2015 and 2016. In 2014, my first year on the Council, I got a score of 83% which was better than the average Brooklyn score of 76 and better than the citywide average of 80.  One of my proudest achievements was the role I played in helping the residents of Red Hook deal with one of the city’s worst environmental disasters at least in decades. When I woke up the morning after Superstorm Sandy hit, I became aware of its considerable devastation. I briefed the then City Council Speaker Christine Quinn, for whom I was working at the time, on what I had learned. She asked me to be her liaison with the Red Hook community and I went into action. I saw people taking things out of their basements, wet mattresses and wet couches and lining them up out on the sidewalk. Soon, debris was piling up on the street and some of it ended up in the middle of the street. The biggest issue I became aware of was the lack of coordination. I spent hours riding my bike around the neighborhood trying to connect people in need with social service organizations, medical resources, and volunteers. I was surprised that it took about two weeks for a full earnest involvement of the government. The trailers started showing up and you saw FEMA in action but they were not very effective. This storm was more than government could have ever handled on its own. I was a government employee but, in the context of Sandy, was not acting like one. We were coordinating an army of over 4,000 people in the first two weeks, encouraging them to help with clean up and gather medical information for use by the popup medical clinic that developed. The people were hugely impactful and the way that they did their work was inspiring. There was a tremendous sense of community. Red Hook is still reeling from Sandy but I have been with them 100% since then. |

**ISSUES**

Please indicate your level of commitment to, and if applicable your recent personal and professional activity with respect to, the following issues:

*(To ensure your responses address the issues NYLCV and its partners are most concerned about, please review* [*NYLCV’s 2014-18 NYC Policy Agenda*](http://nylcv.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/NYC_Agenda_FINAL.pdf) *when formulating your responses)*

Healthy New Yorkers: Policies that improve the well-being of all New Yorkers through the protection of the environment and our natural resources and that provide access to basic needs.

1. Water Quality — Every New Yorker has the right to clean drinking water & waterways

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| I agree with the position that every New Yorker has the right to clean drinking water & waterways.  I am a cosponsor of a bill, Intro. 1346-2016, recently enacted, that provides the City authority “to act in a regulatory capacity to oversee and/or enforce requirements regarding activities that have the potential to contribute pollutants to storm-water runoff and the water bodies surrounding the City.  I was the co-prime sponsor of a bill that would ban the sale of personal care products and over the counter drugs that contain microbeads which significantly pollute the water supply.  In addition, I have a bill, pending introduction, that would require the Office of Emergency Management to take necessary steps to ensure the immediate availability of food and water during an emergency in areas in which food and water supplies might be affected and to post a report of what emergency food and water supplies are available. We are in negotiations about the bill which was proposed based on my experience helping the people of Red Hook deal with the aftermaths of Superstorm Sandy. |

1. Air Quality – Every New Yorker has the right to breathe clean air

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| Of course, we all need to breathe clean air.  I was the Prime Sponsor of 2 bills (Intro 858-2015 and Intro 859-2015) in the City Council that were intended to place strict limits on tourism helicopters and was thereby instrumental in helping the City reach an agreement with the helicopter industry that constitutes the first significant reform of the that industry in New York City’s history. It promised to significantly cut down on the number of helicopter tours near residential areas and major parks, making the air cleaner, while keeping this part of our tourism sector active and viable.  In addition, I was a co-sponsor of a bill, Intro 313-2014 to create an air quality task force to make recommendations to address intermittent long-standing and chronic air pollution problems that are contributing to impaired health, poor scholastic performance, morbidity and mortality in New York City.  I introduced a bill, Intro 0400-2014**,** which would suspend parking rules when fuel rationing is in effect. We have had experience with fuel rationing when drivers sit idling in interminably long gas lines, polluting the air, or circle the streets looking for available spaces. Fortunately, this doesn’t happen much but it is a clean air issue when it happens.  Mold is a significant problem affecting air quality. I am a co-sponsor of a bill, Intro 978-2015, that would establish a local licensing requirement for persons who engage in assessing, remediating, or abating mold conditions. The bill would also establish minimum standards for carrying out such work.  The Red Hook Initiative (RHI), a non-profit organization serving Brooklyn’s Red Hook community, released a report highlighting the continuing problem with mold in the Red Hook Houses of the New York City Housing Authority four years after Hurricane Sandy. I spent a lot of time and effort working with the residents of Red Hook during Sandy and have been concerned with unacceptable conditions in the Red Hook Houses ever since. Mold was an urgent issue in Red Hook long before Hurricane Sandy. Since then, mold’s adverse impact on residents’ health has grown.  And finally, I have been a very active supporter of bicycle riding as an alternative to the use of motor vehicles, which I will discuss more fully in question 8, and am also a supporter of car sharing. Both of these initiatives can result in a reduction of car ownership and utilization which have obvious implications for the quality of the air we breathe. |

1. Healthy & Local Food – Every New Yorker has the right to access healthy, local, affordable produce

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| I agree that the food we all eat must be healthy.  As I mentioned above, I was the co-prime sponsor of a bill, Intro 0928-2015 that would ban the sale of personal care products and over the counter drugs that contain microbeads in part because once disposed of in our waterways, they are known to work their way into our food supply.  I was co-sponsor of a bill, Intro 329-2014, regarding the establishment of an office of food policy within the City Government that would develop and coordinate initiatives to promote access to healthy food for all residents of the city of New York.  I was co-sponsor of another bill, Intro 1456-2017, to require letter grades to be issued to food trucks and carts based on their health inspections. These grades would be required to be posted in public view at all times that the truck or cart is operating so that those frequenting food trucks would have a good idea of how healthy the food on that truck might be. |

1. Homes that offer Protection and Savings – Every New Yorker deserves the protection of a home that is energy efficient and is resilient to impacts of storms heat waves and extended utility outages

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| I agree that all homes should be energy efficient and be able to bounce back from problematic environmental conditions such as storms and outages.  I was co-sponsor of a bill, Int 0633-2015, that required owners of buildings exceeding 50,000 square feet to file an energy efficiency report filed every five years. Many of these structures contain the residences of New Yorkers.  In addition, I have been concerned with the structural integrity of homes, having introduced a bill, 1331-2016, that would require certification by a structural or civil engineer, before a work permit is issued, stating that any building within 110 feet of the outside perimeter of a construction site would not be damaged as a result. This arose because of my experience in Red Hook resulting from the water buildup affecting the homes in the area.  As you point out, geothermal energy can be a good clean energy source. I am a cosponsor of a bill, Intro 609-2015, that requires an identification of the geothermal types of systems and the buildings suitable to be served by geothermal energy. In addition, it requires the a study of waterfront properties suitable for the installation of geothermal systems in marine surface waters |

Strong Neighborhoods: Promote policies that improve the quality of life for communities in all five boroughs

1. Parks & Recreation – Every New Yorker should live within a 10-minute walk of a park that is clean, safe and well-maintained

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| I have been a strong advocate of the development and maintenance of our parks.  The planning and development of Bush Terminal Park, on the Sunset Park waterfront between 44th and 50th Street, was well underway when I became a Council Member, so I won’t claim credit for it, but I did help move it along during its implementation phase. It is a quiet natural space in the industrial section of Sunset Park with spectacular views of the area’s waterways and the Manhattan skyline. This site was cleaned up and opened as a public park in 2014.  Recently, there was alarming news about the delay to the long-awaited reconstruction of the Sunset Park playground which was slated to open in the spring of 2017 but, according to Parks officials was, instead, to open in September. I demanded a full accounting of all capital projects [at the park], including pool repairs, rec center improvements, and the replacement of paths and benches in addition to the long-delayed children’s playground and joined with other concerned members of the community in demanding that the delay be addressed. It was addressed to our satisfaction and final construction is under way.  I recently met with a group of Red Hook residents in Red Hook to get and give information about Red Hook’s parks – some of which have been closed for some time because of pollution problems. I stated that it was essential that everybody have good information and was quoted in the [Red Hook Star Review](http://www.star-revue.com/rally-held-red-hook-ballfields-nathan-weiser/#sthash.oovo5xR3.dpbs) as saying “We want to make sure that everybody knows that the government has been working really hard to make sure that every dollar has been allocated to make sure that every field gets reconstructed,” noting that the power in the community is what got us a fully funded project for every field. |

1. Waterfront Access – Every New Yorker should have safe and public access to clean rivers, creeks, bays, harbors and other waterways

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| Access to the waterfront is of vital importance not only for the recreational opportunities it provides, such as getting to the Bush Terminal Park, on the Sunset Park waterfront referred to in the previous question, but also because many of the jobs are located on the waterfront.  I have been a consistent advocate of the Sunset Park and Red Hook waterfront manufacturing zones primarily because of the jobs that are created through this effort. Consequently, I have been working with the New York City Department of Transportation and UPROSE, a community based organization in Sunset Park, on their Upland Connectors Project. This project is aimed at developing a plan, with involvement of the community, “to establish safe and inviting pedestrian and bicycling routes connecting the upland community to waterfront destinations.” This would include pedestrian safety improvements, bike lanes, landscaping, and wayfinding. |

1. Transportation – Every New Yorker should have safe, affordable, reliable and efficient transportation options in their daily life

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| As mentioned above, I have been a consistent, vocal and demonstrative advocate for transportation options. I don’t own a car and commute either by mass transit or by bicycle and constituents and advocates see me doing that. I enjoy mass transit and want to see it available to everyone.  Consequently, I supported "Fair Fares," which would allow adults in New York City at or below the federal poverty line to purchase MetroCards at a discount price. The Mayor omitted funds for Fair Fares in his $84.7 billion Fiscal Year 2018 preliminary budget citing the cost. As a result, we in the City Council proposed a pilot Fair Fares program be funded with $50 million in the FY 2018 budget.  In a related matter, bicycles are permitted on all subways in the system. However, for many people, carrying bicycles up and down stairs is difficult and for some impossible. Some subway stations have elevators but most do not. If more people could comfortably get their bicycles onto the subway, this would be a tremendously positive travel option. I introduced Resolution 0386-2014 calling on the Metropolitan Transportation Authority to conduct a pilot program involving the installation of structures on subway steps designed to facilitate movement of bicycles. Inclined ramps constructed with aluminum structural angles connected to the stairway under the hand railings will enable passengers to easily push their bicycles up and down the stairs. The area directly under the handrail, along the wall, is unused space and placing the ramps in those areas will not impede foot traffic.  I have been instrumental in encouraging the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) to reconsider the implementation of a protected bike path on 4th Avenue, the most travelled roadway in our community and the natural north-south bicycle route in western Brooklyn. There has been tremendous improvement on 4th Avenue. The Sunset Park Community Board (CB 7), was the first of the three 4th Avenue communities (Park Slope, Sunset Park and Bay Ridge from north to south) that endorsed a multi-phase street safety project by DOT. As a result of changes, there was a 29% reduction in pedestrian injuries, a 13% reduction in all crashes, an 8% reduction in crashes with injuries, and a 38% reduction in the percentage of drivers traveling above the speed limit as a result of the street safety enhancements installed. Despite the lane reduction from 3 to 2 lanes in each direction, peak volumes have slightly increased in both AM and PM peak directions in most locations, and travel times have remained about the same. Pedestrian volumes have also increased throughout the corridor. Given the increase in safety, I have vigorously pursued the development of a protected bike path on 4th Avenue and we are making progress.  I participated actively in discussions about the proposed expansion of the city's ferry system and publicly stated that the Economic Development Corporation should try to offer solutions to siting concerns as it implements the project, particularly in Red Hook which suffered great damage from Superstorm Sandy and is continuously vulnerable to climate changes. I had multiple meetings that included Fairway, the Economic Development Corporation, Community Board 7, Community Board 6 and numerous community groups. The system is began taking on passengers on May 1, 2017 and serves both Sunset Park and Red Hook |

1. Resiliency & Recovery – All communities should be better able to handle extreme weather events: rainfall, snow, storm surges, heavy wind, heat and utility failures

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| My focus on resiliency and recovery issues in Red Hook got me to run for office and has been a focus ever since. I am an active member of the Council’s Committee on Recovery and Resiliency and have participated in almost twenty oversight hearings on a wide variety of issues related to this area. Many of my responses to previous questions, including my statement of accomplishments or experiences dealt with recovery and resiliency. Included are the bill, pending introduction, that would require the Office of Emergency Management to take necessary steps to ensure the immediate availability of food and water during emergencies in areas in which food and water supplies might be affected and to post a report of what emergency food and water supplies are available. Also included is the work I have described relating to the continuing problem with mold in the Red Hook Houses, exacerbated by Superstorm Sandy. Also of relevance is the bill that would require certification by a structural or civil engineer, before a work permit is issued, stating that buildings affected by water buildup in the surrounding soil would not be damaged as a result.  I am continually immersed in recovery and resiliency and am working diligently to continue to help people on the waterfront, particularly in Red Hook. Here is a recent example of that work: The City had been conducting a feasibility study to assess how much, and what kind, of flood protection could be built in Red Hook with $100 million, the amount provided for the flood system by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Residents of Red Hook were called together on October 13 by City Officials and asked how much protection they wanted and where they wanted it? I expressed concern there that tens of millions in funding for the project had been reallocated to the NYC Build It Back program and that their lack of clarity on the subject was disrespectful. I was quoted as saying “It’s time for the federal, state and city government agencies to stop playing around with Integrated Flood Protection funding levels. Community resilience planning meetings and design forums ring hollow when funding is threatened.” [Here’s the coverage](http://patch.com/new-york/gowanus/city-asks-red-hook-how-much-flood-protection-it-wants-where) |

Vibrant Economy: Promote policies that foster green job creation while protecting New Yorkers from the effects of climate change

1. Infrastructure – Make critical investments to maintain New York City’s competitive edge in the global economy while creating local jobs

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| There is much going on, particularly in Sunset Park, in support of economic development. As a matter of fact, when New York State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli had a press conference at Brooklyn Army Terminal, on September 14, 2016, he provided an economic snapshot of Sunset Park and its recent rapid growth in business and population stating “Over the course of the years 2014 and 2015, employment in Sunset Park increased at an exceptional rate at 9.9 percent, faster than the citywide rate of 7.2 percent,” Further, “Sunset Park also has the largest concentration of manufacturing jobs of any neighborhood in New York City with 4,900 such jobs making up 11 percent of all jobs in the area.” There is much concern in my district regarding gentrification and, consequently, attempts to enhance economic development in the district requires insuring community participation in those deliberations to make sure that industry can flourish but the interests of the residents can be met.  For example, in a press conference on February 14, 2017, the Mayor revealed that the city has made a $136 million investment in the Bush Terminal area to include the construction of a 100,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art film and television production facility and major renovations to two existing buildings to create a nearly 200,000 square feet garment manufacturing space known as the Made in NY campus at Bush Terminal, scheduled to open in 2020. . I expressed some concern, stating, as quoted in [The Brooklyn Reporter](http://brooklynreporter.com/story/mayor-announces-made-in-ny-campus-for-sunset-park/) that “this investment should not only rebuild the decay in our infrastructure, it should also strengthen our relationship with each other. We can do that by keeping the momentum going, ensuring this investment ushers in substantial local engagement, accountability and benefits.” This view was expanded in a letter to the Mayor, in which Eric Adams, the Brooklyn Borough President, Members of Congress Nydia Velazquez and Jerrold Nadler and I expressed concern about the possible effects of gentrification on Sunset Park of projects like this. [Here is the coverage](http://ny.curbed.com/2017/2/17/14649452/sunset-park-fashion-hub-bush-terminal-elected-officials).  Similarly, a developer, Thor Equities, has proposed a massive tech complex project that will replace the Revere Sugar Refinery in Red Hook. The residents had been trying to determine how to exert some influence in that decision. I attended a community meeting on the subject and reminded them they have some leverage because Thor may need city approval to get the zoning change it needs and that’s why I told the company, at an earlier meeting, that they should engage in public outreach going forward. |

1. Solid Waste – Effective solid waste management will reduce environmental burdens in overburdened communities, save the city millions of dollars in exporting waste and generate quality green jobs

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| I am a co-sponsor of a bill, Intro 495-2014, that would reduce permitted capacity at putrescible and non-putrescible solid waste transfer stations in certain overburdened community districts in New York City. This is a highly contentious piece of legislation but one that we believe is good for the city.  I am also a co-sponsor of a bill, Intro 201-2014, that would require that discarded carpet covering a floor space of at least ten thousand square feet from commercial buildings or units in New York City be reused or recycled.  I was a very proud co-sponsor of the enacted carry out bag bill, Intro 209-2014, that will impose a minimum fee of five cents for plastic or paper bags at retail, convenience, and grocery stores, with limited exceptions. As is well known, the state threw a monkey wrench into the implementation of this bill and we are awaiting the resolution of this issue. In the meantime, we’ve had internal discussions about the fact that residents may be willing to pay the nickel because they need bags to bring garbage out to their trash cans and also to pick up after their dogs. Obviously, the use of these bags for these purposes defeats the intent of the legislation which is to clean up the environment. Therefore, we have proposed a piece of legislation, on hold until we see if Intro 209 is implemented, to have New York City issue coupons to be circulated in newspapers and on City websites and inserted in supermarket circulars, to enable customers to purchase tall kitchen size (13 gallon) compostable bags for 20 cents each which would be the equivalent of paying 5 cents each for 4 plastic bags. Compostable is better. Stay tuned. |

1. Green Workforce Development – Provide training for New Yorkers to help green the city and support its resiliency

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| I have not participated in the development of specific training programs but did co-sponsor a resolution, Res 0375-2014, to request that the New York State Department of Education include lessons on climate change in K-12 schools' curriculum. This would help to get kids started early on an environmentally friendly vocation or avocation.  I provided a grant of $7,500 to the Gowanus Canal Conservancy to operate their Clean Green Program, a volunteer-based environmental stewardship initiative that takes place monthly from March to November. Specifically, the funds were to be used for material and equipment purchases for neighborhood beautification projects, in addition to personnel expenses and overhead.  The Council has done little in relation to help green the city but I will commit myself to try to change that. |